

EXHIBIT I

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Wildlife Watchdog Eyes New Trade Limits

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THE HAGUE, Netherlands_The **international body overseeing wildlife trade** may throw a lifeline to the shark popular in fish and chips and the aromatic cedar tree used for fine furniture and humidors, as it considers new limitations on commercial fisheries and timber.

A meeting of the 171-nation Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species will wade into commercial issues as never before, in hopes of intervening before species' survival reaches a serious level of risk, its secretary-general, Willem Wijnstekers, said Sunday.

Until now, CITES has stepped in "at a far too late stage, when the species were already or almost commercially extinct," he said, referring specially to timber like mahogany.

The ongoing struggles to control elephant poaching and to protect tigers from extinction are also on the agenda of the 12-day gathering under CITES, a treaty that came into force in 1975.

The conference will consider a European proposal to regulate the trade in the spiny dogfish, a small shark exploited for the fast food business, and the porbeagle, another shark valued for its meat and fin. Both sharks grow slowly, mature late and have few young.

The United States and Canada, which are among the world's top three exporters of spiny dogfish, have signaled they may oppose the proposal, as has New Zealand, said Sonia Fordham, of Oceans Conservancy in Washington.

Another proposal would help protect sawfish, with a famously serrated snout, which are popular aquaria items and also are exploited as food.

Proposals need a two-thirds majority of voting countries. Nongovernment organizations may present papers, speak at meetings and lobby delegates, but cannot vote.

"We think it's still winnable, but the sharks will be one of the biggest battles of the conference," said Carroll Muffett, of the Greenpeace environmental move-

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ment.

"This is about more than sharks. It's about the future of commercially valuable fisheries within CITES," Muffett said.

The conference also will consider listing the Spanish cedar, a tropical hardwood from South America prized for its salmon-colored wood used in cabinets, musical instruments and the aromatic lining of cigar boxes. Conservationists say loggers are stripping that and other hardwood trees from national parks and protected areas in several countries, especially Peru.

Other proposals would limit trade in the wood of the pau brazil tree, used to make high-end bows for stringed instruments. Protection also would be increased for several species of gazelles.

CITES lists more than 7,000 animals and 32,000 plants whose trade is regulated, including about 800 highly threatened species that are banned from commercial trade without special licenses.

Addressing the 1,750 delegates, Wijnseker supported a proposed resolution calling on CITES to consider the livelihood of the people who live closest to wildlife _ often the rural poor in developing countries _ while enforcing the protection of endangered species.

Species must be listed according to scientific data, he said, "but implementation of the relevant trade regime should take the interests of the livelihood of the poor into account."

"Wildlife species are fundamental to livelihoods and economic growth," he said. "I attach great importance to the role CITES can play in this context, and I find it unfortunate that this role is being denied by some."

Some nongovernment organizations object to the resolution, saying it deflects CITES from its original mandate of rescuing vulnerable plants and animals.

"There are any number of agreements and treaties that deal with the human condition, but precious few that focus on species," said Will Travers, chairman of the Species Survival Network, a coalition of about 80 wildlife protection agencies.

----- INDEX REFERENCES -----

NEWS SUBJECT: (Crime (1CR87); Social Issues (1SO05); International Issues (1IN59); World Trade (1WO85); Economics & Trade (1EC26))

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